UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
14th meeting
held on
Thursday, 21 October 1993
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 14th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KUKAN (Slovakia)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 109: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of the publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-794, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/48/SR.14
9 November 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

93-81768 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 109: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (A/48/3 (chap. VII.D), A/48/24, A/48/56-E/1993/6, A/48/207, A/48/289, A/48/291, A/48/293, A/48/462, A/48/476, A/48/484; E/1993/50/Rev.1; A/C.3/48/L.2, L.3, L.4) (continued)

1. Ms. BRUNS (World Bank) said that the World Development Report 1990, issued by the World Bank, had outlined a strategy for reducing poverty that involved investment in the development of human resources, especially among the poor. Lending by the World Bank for human resources development, including education, health, nutrition, early child development, women in development and social security, had increased fivefold during the previous 10 years, and had averaged 16 per cent of total lending in the previous two fiscal years. Increasingly, it focused on programmes that most directly benefited the poor. Both adjustment loans and parallel investment projects were designed to give special protection to poor and vulnerable groups. For example, programmes involving labour-intensive public works, nutrition, targeted food subsidies, severance payments and workers' retraining, social insurance and pensions. Assistance for the restructuring of public spending emphasized increased expenditures for social services and social sector expenditures generally, particularly non-salary items.

2. In 1992, the World Bank created a central vice-presidency for Human Resources Development and Operations Policy (HRO) to provide support on human resources issues to all regions. Its mandate was, first, to strengthen World Bank analytical and policy work on human resources topics so as to serve borrowing countries more effectively; second, to improve the effectiveness of bank operations in the social sectors; third, to provide the World Bank Board and its senior management with information with which to assess bank performance in the areas of poverty reduction, gender and human resources development; and fourth, to strengthen World Bank relations with its sister agencies within the United Nations system and with other development assistance agencies, by providing a focal point for collaboration on human resource issues. Lastly, HRO was responsible for coordinating the contribution of the World Bank to the World Summit on Social Development.

3. In preparation for that Summit, the two sectoral departments of HRO, Education and Social Policy, and Population, Health and Nutrition, were examining such key issues as macroeconomic and sectoral policies and programmes to reduce poverty with the highest potential effectiveness. Among those considered were the reduction of excessive taxation of agriculture, investment in rural and urban infrastructure, technical innovations for small farmers, increased access to land and credit for the poor, and the stimulating of employment by avoiding market distortions. Government expenditures were examined to see whether they were actually targeted at expanding economic opportunities for the poor and a study was made of the effectiveness of social safety nets. Furthermore, the World Bank was preparing poverty assessments of all of its borrowing countries.

(Ms. Bruns, World Bank)

4. The analysis of education in developing countries focused on, firstly the organization and management of education, which included such issues as the impact of decentralization on education efficiency; secondly, on the economics of education, which included the cost of improving quality, the role of the private sector, and the mobilization of private financing; and thirdly, higher education, science and technology aimed at economic development.

5. The World Development Report 1993, Investing in Health had set the objectives of the Bank's activities on health and nutrition: achieving appropriate roles for the government and the market; improving the economic environment for households; investing in public health and essential clinical services; and promoting diversity and competition.

6. In preparation for the 1994 Decennial International Conference on Population and Development, the Bank was examining the links between population and human resource development, poverty reduction and environmentally sustainable development; family planning and reproductive health intervention, reproductive behaviour and the underlying social and economic context. It had established priorities in the area of gender, including a study of the economic costs of gender inequality, and the expansion of economic opportunities for women. The impact of adjustment policies on men and women and the impact on the environment of increased female participation in the management of natural resources were also focuses of interest. One of the Bank's major programmes involved "mainstreaming" gender in staff training.

7. The Bank was analysing the effectiveness of programmes designed to improve the functioning of labour markets: these included skills training, special incentives and retraining for labour redeployment. Social security systems in many borrower countries were failing to achieve adequate levels of efficiency and service delivery, because their clientele was drawn almost entirely from urban middle-income groups. The Bank was therefore conducting a systematic examination of social security and other forms of social insurance with a view to contributing to the design of more efficient and sustainable programmes.

8. The Bank was preparing a special analytical paper on human resources development for preparation at the World Summit on Social Development, whose purpose would be to encourage the adoption of policies demonstrated to promote social development. Although substantial progress had been made over the past generation, the statistics on poverty remained shocking.

9. Mr. BAILLARGEON (Canada) pointed out that a holistic approach to development, balancing social justice with economic growth, was essential to placing people first on the global agenda. Economic adjustment in all countries, and especially in developing areas, had adversely affected the very people most in need. It was widely acknowledged that, by investing in education, health care and other social services, malnutrition, illiteracy, poverty and other social ills could be reduced. The World Summit for Social Development should therefore focus on the three core issues: unemployment, poverty and social integration. Its agenda should take into account the results and lessons of the World Conference on Human Rights, the International Conference on Population and Development, and plans for the forthcoming World

(Mr. Baillargeon, Canada)

Conference on Women. The World Summit for Social Development should have a strong impact on the Agenda for Development currently in preparation.

10. Canada was also concentrating its efforts on preparations for the 1994 International Year of the Family. A federal secretariat had been created to harmonize the work of federal departments and agencies with that of other sectors of Canadian society. The Canadian Committee for the International Year of the Family, a non-profit organization supported by the Government of Canada, would promote and support the participation of the public and private sectors. As the basic unit of social life, the importance of the family in promoting all forms of social development could not be overemphasized.

11. The Canadian Government had also committed itself to working towards a better future for children. A Children's Bureau had been created to oversee the implementation of the commitments made by Canada at the World Summit for Children. It had unveiled a $500 million package of measures to aid children, on the domestic and international fronts. If the world was to overcome the desperate situation of many of its children, countries must rededicate themselves to their Summit commitments.

12. Furthermore, as societies progressively aged, more extensive services and programmes oriented towards resolving such problems of older people as poverty, integration in the community and health care.

13. Canada applauded the leadership of the United Nations in raising awareness of the world's 500 million people with disabilities through its recent Decade of Disabled Persons. It was pleased to have hosted, in Montreal, the 1992 International Conference of Ministers Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities. It fully supported the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and was prepared to consider a modest contribution towards the funding of proposed position of Special Rapporteur.

14. Mrs. PILOTO (Zimbabwe) said that although her delegation appreciated the introductory statement made by the Chief of the Development Analysis Branch on the item under discussion, it disagreed with his statement that much progress had been made in social development since 1952. Statistics on increases in gross primary education enrolment and on reduction in child mortality rates in a handful of countries could not be considered adequate indices of overall improvement. Indeed, the report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future had stressed the alarming proportions of the world social crisis. It had also offered sub-Sahara Africa as an example of the inadequacy of government intervention in the field of social development, singling out Angola, Mozambique and Somalia. Since those countries were at war, it was unrealistic to expect that they could channel resources towards social development. She pointed out that South Africa had not been cited, which could be read to imply erroneously that it had performed its social development obligations adequately for all sectors of its society.

(Mrs. Piloto, Zimbabwe)

15. Her delegation also strongly objected to the observation that Governments should not normally be responsible for intervening in the field of social development. On the contrary, governments alone were in a position to promote and lead the campaign for social development; that responsibility could not be left to private enterprise.

16. The structures of traditional societies had been replaced by bureaucratization and secularization; those at the margins of materialistic modern society had been denied the necessary structures and belief systems required for a livelihood and deprived of opportunities for self-actualization and advancement. Moreover, owing to the alarming level of poverty family life had been undermined, leading to social disorganization, apathy and crime. Research had shown that the incidence of family disputes, violence, divorce and desertion tended to be high among poor families. Indeed poverty had a direct correlation with rapid social change deriving from economic advancement. Her delegation hoped that World Summit for Social Development would provide a forum for frank and open discussion of ways to eliminate poverty and improve the world social situation.

17. Mr. STREJCZEK (Poland) said that the world social situation had sharply deteriorated: poverty and unemployment, leading to a sense of marginalization, had generated political instability in many countries. Extensive international cooperation was increasingly needed to solve contemporary social problems, his country had therefore supported the idea of the World Summit for Social Development from its inception. By addressing the root causes of social degradation and fostering integrated economic and social policies, the Summit could promote a more just and peaceful future. In order to play a pivotal role in the field of social development, the United Nations system needed to strengthen its capacity.

18. His delegation welcomed the Summit initiative as another departure from sterile, ideologically motivated disputes on social issues in favour of specific steps to improve the life of the individual and provide a better standard of living for all. Concrete practical actions that balanced national efforts with the global economic environment were needed. The United Nations financial institutions and specialized agencies could be instrumental in providing a more effective division of labour and harmonized approach among the various elements of the United Nations system.

19. The Summit should strive to achieve a coherent United Nations programme of action in the sphere of social development which, while respecting the decision-making autonomy of organs and agencies and to provide guidelines for coordinating action at the operational level. His Government was specifically interested in how the market could be used to address present social needs, and in formulating innovative ways to respond to the social challenges of the future. In that context, his delegation welcomed the 1993 Report on the World Social Situation as an excellent aid in the preparations for the World Summit for Social Development. The Summit could also benefit from the results of the approaching 1994 International Year of the Family which symbolized the desire to find comprehensive and durable solutions to the many problems confronting society.

20. Mr. PALLAIS (Nicaragua), speaking on behalf of the countries of Central America, said that despite the difficult conditions facing them, those States had a joint vision of the future based on democracy, respect for human rights, economic growth and greater investment in human development. Meeting in Honduras in December 1991, the Central American Presidents had discussed those issues and stressed the need for a regional human development programme for each of the countries of the region with specific objectives to be achieved by the year 2000. They had undertaken the commitment to promote a true development process emphasizing children and youth. They would meet again in Guatemala at the end of October 1993 in order to define a new approach to development based on political stability and national consensus, taking into account the particular needs of each country.

21. Having established peace in the region, the Central American Governments had reaffirmed their determination to allocate an ever-increasing volume of resources to raise living standards. Their efforts to promote human development included comprehensive actions relating to job creation, income generation, food and nutrition, environmental quality, access to basic health services, sanitation, housing, education, community organization, establishment of democratic structures and promotion of human rights.

22. Although progress had been achieved in strengthening democracy and respect for human rights, the economic situation in the region was critical, hampering efforts of the Governments to promote social development. They were beset by problems arising from the debt crisis, a reduction in development assistance, the deterioration in the terms of trade, low commodity prices, increased protectionism on the part of the developed countries, restricted access to markets and technology and increased poverty. Moreover, the human-development indicators in most of the Central American countries had worsened.

23. The Governments recognized the need to achieve macroeconomic and political stability in order to obtain the benefits of the market system and meet the social needs of the people, but their efforts were being frustrated by the austere economic policies imposed by international financial agencies, difficulties in the privatization process, lower commodity prices combined with reduced production and increased unemployment, and a number of national disasters. While they had succeeded in reversing inflation and establishing peace, they required a real cooperation in order to become integrated into the contemporary world economic order.

24. It was hoped that the World Summit for Social Development would lead to the establishment of effective mechanisms to achieve positive tangible results. The Summit should identify the main issues of concern to all developing countries and find realistic solutions to the problems confronting them. There was a need for greater political will on the part of the donor countries, international agencies and financial institutions in providing increased assistance for implementing the decisions taken at the Summit. The Summit should elaborate a joint North-South strategy to respond to the new international realities and lay down general guidelines for operational activities for development in accordance with the priorities, objectives and national development plans of the developing countries.

(Mr. Pallais, Nicaragua)

25. The commitments undertaken at the World Summit must respond to the needs of developing countries in a flexible manner and without imposing any conditions. The Summit should also consider ways of mitigating the social cost of structural adjustment, particularly in countries like Nicaragua which were undergoing a fundamental and complex transition.

26. The Economic and Social Council should play a leading role in coordinating social plans at the international level and implementing United Nations development activities in the social field.

27. He considered that the forthcoming International Year of the Family would be an excellent opportunity to obtain information on innovative policies, pilot projects and local activities aimed at strengthening the role of the family in society.

28. Mr. BYUNG YONG SOH (Republic of Korea) said that social development should be given priority because the ultimate aim of development was to improve the quality of life for humankind. The 1993 Report on the World Social Situation (E/1993/50/Add.1) provided a great deal of information on social conditions in the world and was useful in the preparatory work for the World Summit for Social Development. His delegation noted with satisfaction the work done by the regional commissions in the preparations for the World Summit, as described in document A/48/476. He drew attention to the fact that ECLAC and ECA had included preparations for the Summit in the agenda for their sessions and suggested that the other regional commissions should do likewise. Consideration should be given to how the decisions taken at the Summit would be implemented. The role of journalists, particularly those from developing countries, was very important in that regard: they could make a positive contribution by disseminating information on the results of the Summit in their countries at the grass-roots level.

29. His country attached great importance to family issues and hoped that the current session of the General Assembly would formulate a detailed plan of action for the upcoming International Year of the Family. As the bridging unit between the individual and the community, the family was the basis for social cohesion and stability. Attention should focus on low-income families. In its new five-year economic plan, the Republic of Korea placed a high priority on improving the status of such families and protecting their rights. Active cooperation with non-governmental organizations in the field of education, health, employment, housing, crime prevention, and protection of the disabled, children and elderly persons was essential in promoting family issues.

30. He hoped that the major international conferences to be held in 1994 and 1995 would focus continued attention on matters concerning disabled persons at the national and international level. His delegation supported the appointment of a Special Rapporteur to monitor the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and hoped that a long-term strategy to implement the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons to the Year 2000 and Beyond would be adopted at the next session of the General Assembly.

(Mr. Byung Yong Soh, Republic of Korea)

31. All countries should ensure participation by non-governmental organizations in national planning and implementation in the field of social development. His Government expected to see active participation by those organizations in the major international conferences in 1994 and 1995 and welcomed the initiative taken by ESCAP to establish a forum of non-governmental organizations concerned with social development issues.

32. Ms. BUTOW (Australia) said that the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities provided a guide for policy-making and taking action; they incorporated the principles of equality, non-discrimination and full participation, which were basic to social policy development. Together with Australia's Disability Discrimination Act, the Standard Rules formed the basis for her country's disability strategy, which would provide a framework for cooperation by local governments in developing policies to ensure equal opportunity to people in all areas of life. A plan of action setting forth priorities and a time frame for strategies to implement the Standard Rules was of vital importance.

33. The efforts by the United Nations to help the disabled had had a profound impact on Australia's domestic policy in that field. Her country supported the development of a long-term strategy to implement the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and looked forward to the adoption by the General Assembly of the Standard Rules, which, together with an international plan of action, the long-term strategy and the World Programme of Action offered the next opportunity for significant reform.

34. Mrs. DROZD (Belarus) said that the social challenges facing the world were becoming more and more acute. Her delegation was deeply concerned at the scale of human suffering in various countries and regions manifested in uncontrolled flows of refugees and by drug abuse, crime, terrorism and poverty among the vulnerable groups of society. Profound structural changes, economic stagnation and deterioration of living standards underscored the need for the world community to redouble its efforts to promote social development. In that context, her Government attached considerable importance to the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade and was prepared for constructive cooperation based on a comprehensive approach to solving social problems.

35. In its transition to a market economy, Belarus had developed a social protection system based on guarantees for labour rights and employment, access to training, and ensuring proper working conditions. The complicated social and economic situation in her country, aggravated by the Chernobyl disaster, had considerably augmented the disabled person population. In 1993, the increase in the number of disabled persons in Belarus had exceeded the level of labour resources. Her Government therefore was very concerned about the problem and had taken a number of legislative measures, including the adoption of a law on the protection of disabled persons, which was based on the principles of rehabilitation, equality and integration into society.

(Mrs. Drozd, Belarus)

36. United Nations technical assistance programmes were of great importance to her country. In that connection, she expressed her Government's appreciation to the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs for its practical recommendations concerning strategies to improve programmes for the disabled. On the basis of those recommendations, her Government had started preparations for a regional seminar to be held in Minsk on model rules and coordination on disability issues for the CIS member States.

37. Belarus hoped that the General Assembly would adopt the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and supported the idea of appointing a Special Rapporteur to monitor implementation of the Rules. Her delegation expressed satisfaction at the preparatory work for the International Year of the Family and welcomed the recommendation by the Commission for Social Development to observe May 15 of every year as the International Day of the Family. Lastly, she reaffirmed her Government's determination to do its utmost in pursuing the noble goals of the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development.

38. Mr. FSADNI (Malta) said that the main objective of an integrated social policy must be to make every effort to promote equality among all citizens while respecting the inherent diversity of human beings and ensuring the full development of their talents and skills for the benefit of society as a whole. In that connection, Malta had effected the transition from a welfare State model to a caring society model based on a recognition of the dignity of each individual. Top priority had been given to the training of an adequate number of specialized personnel in the various fields of social policy.

39. The International Year of the Family should be followed by far-reaching policy measures and effective implementation. In that context, he welcomed the Declaration of Valletta adopted by the Europe and North America Preparatory Meeting for the International Year of the Family and reiterated his support for the adoption of a declaration on the family. His country which had made the participation of non-governmental organizations a cornerstone in the formulation and implementation of its social policy, particularly with respect to the protection and assistance of the family was about to host the World NGO Forum on the theme "Promoting families for the well-being of individuals and societies" as a contribution to the 1994 International Year of the Family. The Forum's aim was to focus international action on grass-roots problems.

40. The momentum generated by the United Nations Decade for Disabled Persons should not be allowed to peter out. In that connection, Malta welcomed the draft resolution entitled "Standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities" recommended to the current General Assembly session by the Economic and Social Council. Many of the issues addressed by those standard rules were already being tackled by his country's National Commission for the Disabled. The intensification of activities by governmental and non-governmental bodies to promote the independence and social integration of disabled persons had raised the general level of awareness of the Maltese people on those issues. Indeed, the disabled would cease to be handicapped only when the able-bodied radically changed their attitudes towards them. Malta continued to support appropriate regional and global initiatives in that field.

(Mr. Fsadni, Malta)

41. The only way to meet the challenges created by a rapidly growing elderly population was a radical transformation from the welfare State model of social policy to the caring society model in which every social institution had an important role to play. His Government had taken a number of measures to complement universal pension entitlements and had established a National Council for the Elderly. His country was host to the International Institute on Ageing, whose main objective was to provide multidisciplinary training programmes oriented towards persons, particularly from developing countries, who worked or intended to work in the field of ageing or with the elderly. The Institute deserved the continued strong financial support of the international community.

42. Ms. JAHAN (Bangladesh) said that the 1995 World Summit on Social Development should serve not only to highlight the gravity and magnitude of the social problems facing both the developing and developed worlds but also to strengthen the case for concerted international action to address the issue in its totality and lead to the adoption of a common strategy for social progress and a better standard of life in larger freedom. While individual Governments were primarily responsible for their own social development, a favourable external economic climate and adequate international assistance were needed to reverse the adverse trends in the global socio-economic situation. In that connection, the North-South dialogue must be revitalized, the Uruguay Round must be successfully concluded and the 1990 Special Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries must be implemented as soon as possible. All those measures could strengthen collective self-reliance and help to achieve sustainable socio-economic development which would be to the mutual benefit of both the poor South and the rich North.

43. The challenges faced by Bangladesh in the area of social development were typical of the least developed countries. Her Government, in its commitment to a qualitative change in the life of the people, had made poverty alleviation, employment generation and human resources development the corner-stone of its development plan. Social strategies had been elaborated to enhance the status of women, children, disabled persons and minorities. High priority had been placed on multisectoral coordination because an appropriate mix of the welfare State and the private sector was essential for any significant progress in social development. Improved coordination in that field between the United Nations, particularly the specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions, was needed.

44. It was vital to harness regional structures for peace, stability and socio-economic prosperity as engines of progress. Bangladesh, as current Chairman of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), was fully committed to the eradication of poverty from the region. The report of the Independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation, endorsed by the SAARC Summit in Dhaka, could be an important regional input to the World Social Summit.

45. Mr. NANDOE (Suriname) said that according to the Report on the World Social Situation, a disproportionate share of the over one billion people living in poverty were women and children who lacked access to basic social services and were generally unable to enhance their earning capacity. Under conditions of mass poverty, priority must be given to ensuring that basic economic needs were met. The key to poverty alleviation and social integration was enabling the poor to harness their own productive potential. Experience had demonstrated that the process of development would falter unless the population as a whole, especially the poor, acquired the appropriate skills and were healthy enough to participate effectively.

46. The eradication of poverty and the promotion of employment were key issues for consideration by the World Summit for Social Development. His delegation hoped that the preparatory process would culminate in a consensus on a concrete plan of action based on paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 47/92. The Summit should not only promote a better understanding of the problems before it but should also address their underlying causes.

47. Suriname supported the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and shared the view that the disability aspects of human resources development should be integrated in all United Nations activities. In that connection, it supported the long-term strategy to implement the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

48. The International Year of the Family would highlight the importance of the family in social, economic, environmental and human rights issues. In the context of the Year, a Committee had been set up in Suriname to study among other things the effects of microeconomic changes on family life, existing family related legislation and the need for legal reforms in that area and to encourage a change in society's perception of the respective roles of men and women in the family, especially with regard to the education and care of children.

49. Mr. WISNUMURTI (Indonesia) said that questions of social development were now assuming their rightful importance on the global agenda. Many significant advances in such areas as universal child immunization, greater access to health care and education had been made in the social field. However, the situation in many parts of the world, especially developing countries, remained precarious, with little hope of immediate relief, as evidenced by the number of people living below the poverty line and millions of children dying from preventable diseases. The alleviation of poverty must be made a priority goal of all countries.

50. The World Summit for Social Development provided a forum for the discussion of a multifaceted social development agenda at the highest level. However, a genuine commitment on the part of developed as well as developing countries was required in order to attain the goals of the Summit. In that regard, he drew attention to document A/48/484 in which the non-aligned movement had reiterated its firm commitment to participate actively in the Summit which it felt must address and find solutions to the core issues of poverty, unemployment and social cohesion.

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Indonesia)

51. The efforts of the non-aligned and other developing countries to reactivate a North-South dialogue on economic cooperation was particularly relevant to the enhancement of comprehensive social development on a global scale. All development efforts should be made with a view to alleviating poverty, enhancing human development and increasing the overall quality of life.

52. His delegation was confident that the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development would meet its responsibility for coordinating the preparations for the World Summit for Social Development and looked forward to reviewing the preparatory studies for the Summit on some of the major economic and social issues facing the international community. The United Nations remained the central organization capable of addressing the multiple issues associated with social development and integrating them with issues of economic development, peace and security.

53. The 1993 Report on the World Social Situation (E/1993/50) provided a good analysis of social and economic indicators and poverty-related factors. The chapter on Education and Literacy in particular shed light on the complex nature of social development. Access to a modern education, central to his Government's policies related to youth, was essential for young people to be able to compete in the global market, but it alone did not constitute a guaranteed path to success. Providing productive employment opportunities that utilized the increasing knowledge and skills of the workforce was a long-term challenge, especially in the developing countries where it was estimated that the labour force would increase at approximately 3 per cent per year. In order to absorb that increase, the economies of developing countries would need to grow at between 8 and 9 per cent. The economic growth of countries today was more than ever dependent on their success in raising national productivity. The growing interdependence among nations implied that global stability depended on the economic and social stability of the developing countries. The North and South should work together to resolve their common concerns and develop coherent policies for future global prosperity.

54. Ms. SAMONTE-LIMJUCO (Philippines) said that sweeping changes in the world's ethnic, social and political situation had awakened new interest in social development. Unrelenting poverty, widespread unemployment, exploding populations and environmental concerns had engendered a sense of uncertainty which had lead to a definition of development calling for a humane social infrastructure that provided equal opportunities to all. Given the importance of the World Summit for Social Development, no effort should be spared in the preparatory phase to ensure its successful outcome. Her country was planning to host an Asia and the Pacific Ministerial Conference in October 1994 in preparation for the Summit to discuss social integration, poverty alleviation and expansion of productive employment, the three main themes of the Summit.

55. The United Nations should focus on those sectors of society which were at particular risk of abuse, exploitation or neglect: women, children, the ageing and persons with disabilities. International cooperation was needed to solve the growing problem of prostitution and the traffic in women in both the developed and developing countries. Children in large cities were the most vulnerable: thousands were dying from disease, hunger and drug abuse. In that connection, her Government wished to reaffirm its commitment to the Convention

(Ms. Samonte-Limjuco, Philippines)

on the Rights of the Child and the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children. Her Government had increased budget allocations for education and health care and had initiated a plan to provide children with free basic education and educational assistance, including subsidized tuition fees, by the year 2000. Her Government had hosted conferences on issues of children's rights and the environment and welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 44/82 proclaiming 1994 as the International Year of the Family.

56. Her delegation urged the speedy adoption of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. She noted that it would have been preferable if some provision had been made to ascertain whether or not any existing mechanisms could do the work of monitoring the rules prior to appointing a special rapporteur, and if that post were funded from the regular budget to ensure continuity in operations. General Assembly resolution 47/88 had requested the Secretary-General to turn the focus of the United Nations programme on disability from awareness raising to action. Among the measures proposed was the review of the Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to include an evaluation of the way the society treated its disabled citizens. Her delegation supported UNDP's recent proposal to discuss the creation of a disability index to be linked to the Standard Rules in order to invest it with the importance it deserved.

57. Mr. KATHAMBANA (Kenya) noted that according to the 1993 report on the World Social Situation, some progress had been achieved in the area of social development since the first such report was presented in 1952. However, poor health care, undernourishment, unemployment and other problems continued to plague the developing countries. Efforts to alleviate those problems in his country had not been effective in reversing existing trends. Increased and balanced investment in the social and economic sectors from external sources was needed to supplement national efforts. His Government's attempts to address the lack of social services caused by a recent influx of refugees and decreased development assistance had necessitated the curtailment of some programmes.

58. The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (A/C.3/48/L.3) provided guiding principles for the rehabilitation of the disabled and the provision of equal employment opportunities. His Government had worked side by side with other friendly Governments and non-governmental organizations to create greater opportunities for disabled persons, including rehabilitation programmes which had benefited from the generous assistance of various countries, organizations and individuals.

59. To combat unemployment, his country had promoted self-employment as a profitable option to wage labour through equitable access to bank loans and business facilities. As a result, many successful cooperatives had been formed but unemployment among young people, especially in urban areas, continued to be a problem. The increasing number of slums and street children was of particular concern. His Government was attempting to improve the infrastructures and quality of life in rural areas in order to make them more attractive and to slow the growing migration to the cities.

(Mr. Kathambana, Kenya)

60. In most developing countries with large rural populations, emphasis was placed on the strong traditional family and on care of the ageing. His Government had enlisted the assistance of non-governmental organizations and religious institutions to meet the needs of the elderly. His delegation was gratified by the report of the Secretary-General on the International Year of the Family (A/48/293) and expressed its readiness to participate actively in the preparatory meetings for the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in 1995.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.